

# Leighton Linslade Land South of High Street

**Spatial Framework**

**Draft Report  
March 2025**



### Quality information

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### Revision History

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	27.02.2025	Site visit, research and writing	Hoorieh Morshedi	Senior Urban Designer
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A photograph of a three-story brick building with a central pediment and a large green circle overlay. The building has multiple windows with yellow frames and a central red door. A sign on the left reads 'POST OFFICE' and 'Bureau de Change'. A green utility box is visible near the door. Two people are standing on the sidewalk in the foreground.

Introduction

01



# 1. Introduction

**This report sets out a spatial framework and guidance for the site designated as Land at South of High Street in Leighton Buzzard.**

## 1.1 Overview

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide a high level spatial framework to support Leighton Linslade Town Council. The steering group provided guidance and local knowledge that has greatly informed this spatial framework.

This report focuses on the site known as Land South of the High Street and presents a set of objectives intended to guide the future development of this site. These objectives concern a range of topics relevant to the site including:

- Heritage;
- Scale;
- Walking and cycling connections;
- Land uses;
- Car parking; and
- Green spaces and public realm.

The spatial framework presents two potential options for development:

- Option one - mixed-use residential led development; and
- Option two - culture and community-led mixed-use.



**Figure 01:** Day centre on site overlooked by residential properties.



**Figure 02:** Entrance to the car park from Duncombe Drive.

## 1.2 Purpose of this document

It is intended that this independent technical report is used to inform policies that will influence the design of new development in the Land South of the High Street site and have weight in the planning process.

The masterplanning studies are high level and illustrative, prepared to demonstrate how the town centre policy principles that the updated Neighbourhood Plan and Town Council wish to promote could be applied to the Land South of the High Street. We have not undertaken technical studies on topics such as ground conditions, traffic and drainage (although AECOM specialists have inputted into design development). It is expected that full co-design exercises are undertaken by applicants on the sites. This report is just a step in that direction, enabling stakeholders to progress from an informed position.

The report provides an evidence base and high-level spatial framework. It is expected that a detailed evidence and design process including pre-application engagement

in accordance with Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Plan pre-application protocol is undertaken by applicants on the site.

The report should be read in conjunction with its sister Town Centre Masterplan, which considers design and materials, as well as the wider town centre area and the Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Plan.

## 1.3 Drivers

A Development Brief was originally created for the site by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) in 2012 (see section 2.1 below) and to date there has been no redevelopment. As such, the Town Council has taken the opportunity to consider how this area could be transformed, with the following drivers:

- Leighton Linlade is a growth area and will be expected to deliver further housing in the years to come. Given the community response to early engagement in 2024 that only town centre brownfield should be considered given the amount of recent housing

development, this document considers how to maximise the redevelopment potential of the site to limit the amount of greenfield/greenbelt release needed in the next Local Plan.

- It is recognised that there are considerable challenges with this site situated in the core of the medieval town, therefore establishing viable uses and bringing forward sufficient enabling development to fund community infrastructure and cultural facilities will require any scheme to be led by residential development to pay for improvements.
- Given the resourcing constraints on the public sector, development is substantially reliant upon private sector funding to bring it forward, so any scheme will need to be commercially attractive in order to lever the community and social infrastructure gains sought. The report will inform subsequent viability testing.
- Recognising that there is a desire to reduce congestion and traffic in the



town centre, the Neighbourhood Plan is promoting other methods of travel including cycling, walking and use of public transport. Considering if this site could be used to bring forward development which is less dependent on use of the private car, promoting use of public transport, providing facilities and services easily accessible on foot and introducing a much higher availability of car clubs and spaces to park these cars, could be transformative. Car clubs are a great way to get cars off the road, lessening the need for private or single-use car ownership and helping reduce air pollution and congestion.

- Promoting use of a highly sustainable brownfield location.
- Low car developments provide increased opportunities to create central spaces for residents to socialise outdoors in new and improved green spaces without the areas all being consumed by parking or increasing air pollution, to make a more pleasant environment.

- Recognising that there is a climate emergency and that development needs be be responsible.
- Wishing to ensure the town centre is resilient, responding to the changes in town centre functions and encouraging additional footfall from people living, working and spending their money in the town to ensure it continues to be a thriving vibrant place.
- Town centre car parks are not at capacity, according to a 2023 CBC survey.
- Looking to promote a vibrant mixed demographic through the provision of smaller dwellings which may attract young people as well as older people looking to downsize or reside in sheltered accommodation, including those looking to rent as well as buy.

This document builds on and updates the masterplanning work undertaken for the Town Council in 2023, which has formed the basis for some of the proposals in this report (see section 2.2 below).

## 1.4 Preparing the report

The following steps were agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to produce this report, which draws upon policy development and engagement work undertaken by the Town Council's neighbourhood plan steering group.

The report is based on an understanding of the policy background (see chapter 2), the various studies that have been undertaken relating to the site (also see chapter 2) and the public engagement regarding the site and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan (see chapter 3).

Studies reviewed included the independent car parking study commissioned by CBC in 2023, which indicated that approximately 20% of all car parking spaces were available, even during the busy December period<sup>1</sup>.

Some of these evidence base studies listed in Chapter 2.

1. <https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>.





The site was analysed in terms of movement patterns, active travel modes, land use, building heights, heritage assets, public realm, and green infrastructure.

Following a workshop with the steering group, a set of guiding principles were agreed (see chapter 5 below) and the two illustrative options prepared.

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for the proposed scheme, outlining its potential deliverability based on the findings from the site visit. The aim was to produce a report that offers the best chance of a favourable viability assessment, ensuring the scheme is based on realistic and achievable assumptions, as well as meeting the placemaking requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The options are a high-level outline of what could be deliverable, recognising that certain elements of the spatial framework may be subject to negotiation and further refinement. It is important to highlight that this report has yet to undergo a full viability assessment and should be viewed as a preliminary basis for future discussions and decision-making.

## 1.5 Area of study

The Land South of the High Street is an area measuring approximately 2.65 hectares which lies to the south of Leighton Buzzard High Street. The land is bounded by the backs of plots of properties fronting onto the High Street, the post office, Parson's Close Recreation Ground and residential properties.

The wider context is the town centre of Leighton Buzzard. Immediately north is the High Street and main shopping area. To the west is All Saints Church, churchyard, Parson's Close Recreation Ground and Pulford Lower School. To the south and east there are predominantly residential areas with some local amenities.

Current vehicular access to the site is via Duncombe Drive which connects from Lake Street. There is vehicular access to the west part of the site from Church square; however, currently there is no east-west route which links between these two access points.

The land has been previously identified in a Central Bedfordshire Council Development Brief in 2012 which was adopted as Technical Guidance for Development Management Purposes. This report uses the same site boundary as in that report.

No significant development has happened on the site since the Brief, indicating the need for a rethink.



**Figure 03:** The High Street north of the site.



**Figure 04:** Parson's Close Recreation Ground to the west of the site.





**Figure 05:** Map showing Land South of the High Street within its local context in Leighton Buzzard town centre (Source: ArcGIS).





**Strategic regeneration  
and policy context**

**02**

## 2. Strategic regeneration and policy context

### 2.1 Planning policy and guidance

#### 2.1.1 National Planning Policy and Guidance:

- 2024 – National Planning Policy Framework
- 2021 – National Model Design Code
- 2021 – National Design Guide
- 2021 – Build Back Better High Streets
- 2020 – Building for a Healthy Life
- 2007 – Manual for Streets

#### 2.1.2 District Planning Policy and Guidance: Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015 to 2035

The current Central Bedfordshire Local Plan covers the period from 2015 to 2035 and was adopted in July 2021. In the Local Plan Leighton Buzzard is identified as a Principal Town Centre with the principal function to “provide a range of shops including many national multiple retailers and independent shops. Provides and extensive range of services, facilities and leisure uses and is home to a large number of businesses”.

The Local Plan suggests that density needs to be responsive to its immediate surroundings. It state that higher densities will be supported within urban locations and along existing and potential new public transport corridors.

#### Central Bedfordshire Design Guide August 2023 SPD

The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide suggests that the density of a development should be carefully considered to ensure it is making the most efficient use of land available whilst reflecting the existing character of the area. Density should be determined by the context within which a development is built and should be sympathetic in terms of the surrounding context. Higher densities are appropriate in town centres and accessible locations close to public transport routes, shops, and facilities.

The Design Guide provides examples of densities between 35 dph and 74 dph; the latter, which is appropriate for town centre brownfield sites. An example of this higher density, appropriate for town centres, is shown in figure 6.



**Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs:  
Land South of the High Street for  
Central Bedfordshire Council, Technical  
Guidance, 2012**

As noted above, the Technical Guidance document: Land South of the High Street, adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council in 2012. The purpose of the brief was to showcase the development opportunity and set out the Council's development aspirations for the site.

The report establishes a set of guiding planning principles that form a framework for the preparation of development proposals and were intended to be used as the basis to determine future planning applications affecting the site.

However, there has been no development since this technical guidance document was adopted and given it was published in 2012, it is now outdated. Therefore this report



**Figure 06:** Trumpington Meadows as an example that fits well with the land south of High Street. The use of an angular roofline also fits within the local context.

offers an updated set of objectives and high level options for the site to encourage development of the land. The objectives and high level spatial framework in this report draws upon some of the ideas supported in the Technical Guidance document. This includes the introduction of a service road through the Land South of the High Street site which was drawn up in the indicative overarching framework plan of the Technical Guidance.

#### Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs: Land South of the High Street for Central Bedfordshire Council

#### 4. Vision and Objectives

Indicative Overarching Framework Plan



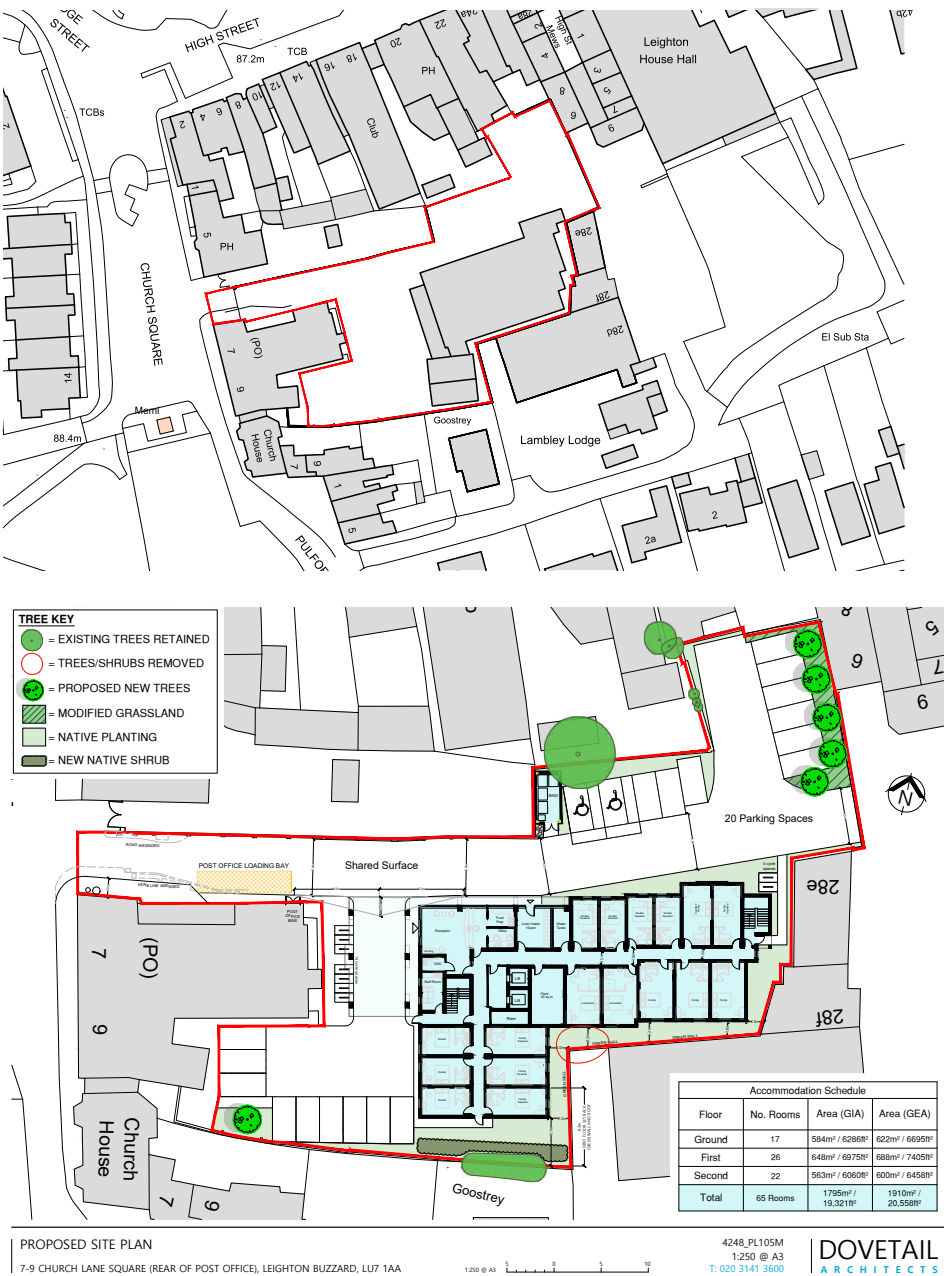
FIG. 4.2

**Figure 07:** Map showing the service route proposed in the indicative overarching framework plan in the Technical Guidance report produced for Central Bedfordshire Council.

Existing planning application on site

A planning application has been submitted for the land located to the rear of 7-9 Church Square, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 7AE. The application reference number is CB/24/01869/FUL, and it was submitted on 26th June 2024. The site boundary and proposed site plans are presented on this page. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing sorting office and industrial sheds, with the construction of a 65-room hotel, together with associated hard and soft landscaping.

Some in the town feel that alternative proposals, including a mixed-use development or cultural uses, may be preferable for the site. Should planning permission be granted, the number of residential units proposed within this report will need to be adjusted accordingly, reflecting any reduction due to this development. This site will need to be considered within the options presented in Chapter 6. The proposed access to the site is indicated on the plans, with the potential for future connectivity to Duncombe Drive should further developments come forward.





### **Parking Standards for New Developments 2023 SPD**

The parking standards for residential development are shown in [Parking Standards for New Developments SPD](#).

Since this is a high-level spatial framework report, it does not provide the number of parking spaces, including visitor car parking and other spaces associated with different uses. If any detailed masterplan takes place in the future the numbers should be provided based on the parking standards outlined in the 'Parking Standards for New Developments 2023 SPD,' unless a more updated report is adopted.

### **Recreation and Open Space Strategy Technical Guidance**

Policies relating to recreation and open space are set out in the Recreation and Open Space Strategy Technical Guidance including guidance on accessibility, quantity and quality of different types of open spaces.

### **2.1.3 Leighton Linlade Town Council: Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM, 2025)**

This report has been undertaken to inform the Neighbourhood Plan. It notes that Leighton Linlade has a balanced housing mix with semi-detached housing being the most common dwelling type, comprising 31% of the total housing mix. Typically residential properties consist of 3-bedroom homes, differing from Central Bedfordshire more generally which sees a higher proportion of 4+ bedroom homes.

The report includes modelling to understand the optimal mix of housing to best accommodate future demographic trends and address imbalances to the existing housing stock has been conducted and the results show priority across the town as a whole should be given to the delivery of 3-bedroom homes.

These results should be considered in combination with other factors such as the

nearby stock of housing, the role of the NA in the wider housing market, and site-specific factors.

As a town centre site, this spatial framework assumes that a mix of mainly 1 and 2 bedroom apartments will be the most efficient use of land and will help to meet that part of the housing need. This approach aligns with The Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD (2023) which acknowledges that the housing development in town centres will often have a housing mix that will predominantly consist of flats.

## 2.2 2023 masterplan

A masterplan for the site was produced for the Town Council in 2023. Several key elements from this proposal were considered in the development of this report, including health facilities, community uses, meeting spaces, workshops, studios, retail, and residential uses. In addition, we include the service road - assumed one-way - in the same location proposed on CBC development brief (See section “2.1 Planning policy and guidance” above) and this masterplan.

While some of the proposed uses will face viability challenges, they remain valuable concepts. These could potentially be considered for other parts of the town centre or included here if external funding is secured.

Key elements of the 2023 masterplan include:

- Civic Hub: Café, reception, civic offices, and flexible spaces.
- Health Hub: Spread over two floors with parking within the Multi-Storey Car Park.
- Peppercorn Centre: Café, meeting spaces, workshops, and changing facilities.
- Youth & Community Hub: Spaces for community groups, with first-floor spaces above commercial units.
- Retail & Residential: Retail with potential residential above.
- Multi-Storey Car Park: 400 spaces over four floors.

While some of these elements were not included in this spatial framework report (such as multi-storey car park) due to uncertainty over need, feasibility and viability, they should remain part of the broader aspirations for the town centre's future development.



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 Langford Buzzard  
 Land South of High Street



The background image shows a stone building with a gabled roof and a chimney on the left, and a tall, pointed church spire on the right. A large green circle is overlaid in the center, containing the text 'Engagement' and '03'.

**Engagement**

**03**

# 3. Engagement

**This chapter provides a summary of engagement relevant for the Land South of the High Street, which has been taken into account in the preparation of this report.**

## 3.1 Overview

There are two main engagement events which this report has drawn evidence and findings from. These are the public engagement which the Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group conducted in February 2024, and the workshop which AECOM team members attended with members of the Steering Group on 5th November 2024.

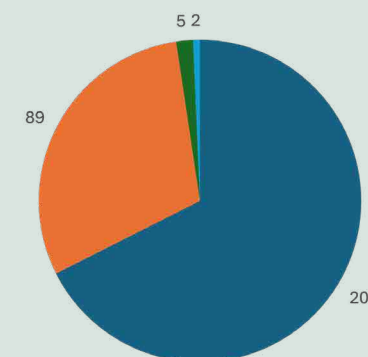
## 3.2 Public engagement

Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group undertook public engagement to gather evidence for their Neighbourhood Plan. This involved a survey sent out to residents of Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Area, completed online with

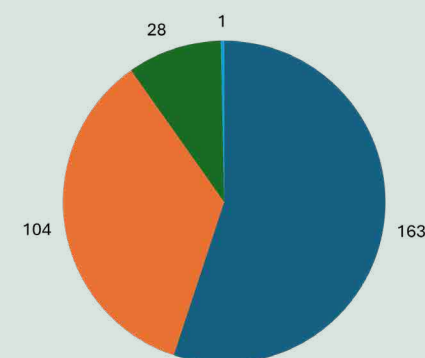
a set of questions asking the public for their opinions about various topics relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan. There were 296 responses in total to the survey. The full set of questions explored a range of topics; the results below show only those which are relevant to this Land South of the High Street spatial framework report.

Respondents were asked to identify the level of importance they attributed to different statements from 'Not Important', 'Important', 'Very Important' or 'Don't Know'. The following pie charts show some of these results.

Avoiding harm to the natural environment/ promoting biodiversity.



Mitigating the effect of climate change/ promoting a low carbon future for the town.

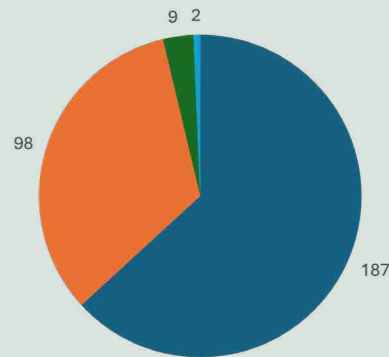


### Key

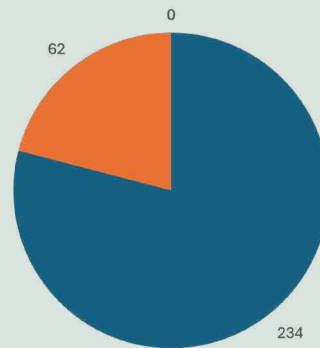
- Very Important
- Important
- Not Important
- Don't Know



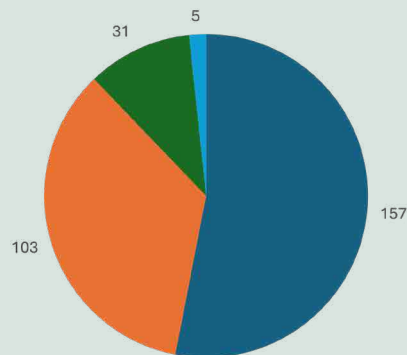
Preserving the heritage and historic buildings in our town



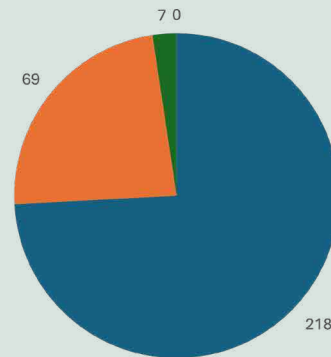
Protecting and enhancing our green spaces



Making 'active travel' easier around the town (walking/cycling/use of public transport)



Retaining and enhancing our community facilities



### Key

- Very Important
- Important
- Not Important
- Don't Know

The results show that the majority of respondents rated all the topics/statements included here as 'important' or 'very important'. In particular the statements which had the most responses of 'very important' were 'Avoiding harm to the natural environment/promoting biodiversity' - 67% rated this as 'very important'; 'Protecting and enhancing our green spaces' - 79% rated this as 'very important'; and 'retaining and enhancing our community facilities' - 74% rated this as 'very important'.

These responses have been taken as evidence to support the objectives and spatial framework in this report.



### 3.3 Key themes

AECOM team members met with members of the steering group at Leighton Lincolns town hall on 5th November 2024 for a workshop to discuss the priorities for the report.

The steering group represents the interests of the Neighbourhood and discussions highlighted the key themes for the Land South of the High Street, shown opposite. These have informed the objectives and spatial framework in this report.

#### Key Themes



##### **Community:**

Provide spaces for the community to gather



##### **Movement:**

Encourage active travel through accessible, well-connected places



##### **Creative industries:**

Provide spaces for creative industry and other local businesses to grow and thrive



##### **Environment and green space:**

Enhance and protect the natural environment



##### **Heritage and built character:**

Celebrate the heritage of the town



Site analysis

04



## 4. Site analysis

### 4.1 Evolution of the Land South of High Street

The Land South of High Street was primarily green space in the 19th century, formed of the gardens and fields at the backs of buildings on the High Street, Lake Street and the Vicarage site. The High Street and Lake Street had well established markets by this time, with the historic Tuesday market day and extra market for provisions on Saturday which was established during the 19th century.

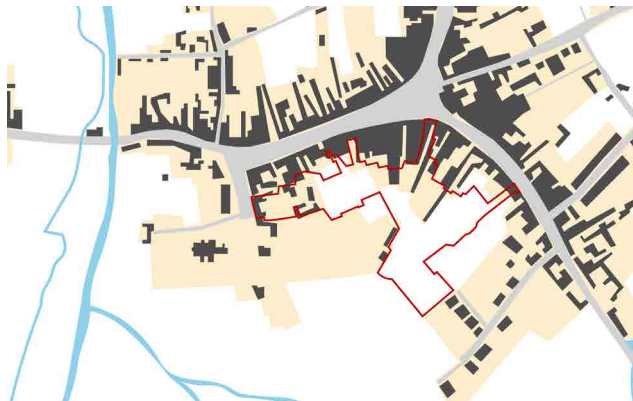
The only development on the site during the early 20th century was Church Lane which was built on the Vicarage space opposite All Saints Church. This had a small number of residential properties on the southern side. There was also some development along Grove Road, south of the site. Outside of the site the town centre started to expand, particularly to the north and east.

Post-war more housing was built on Church Avenue. Later in the 20th century, within the

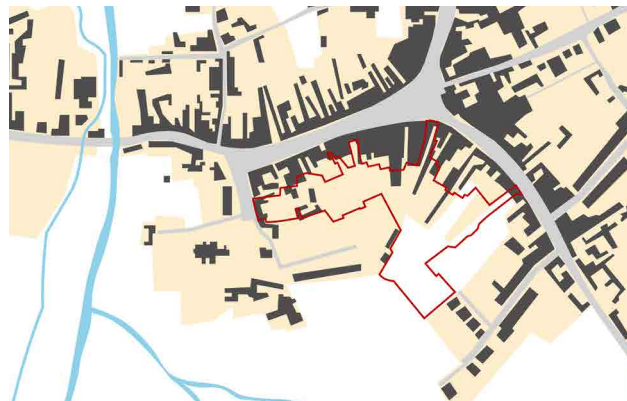
south part of the site Westlands Care Home and Day centre and the fire station were built.

#### Key

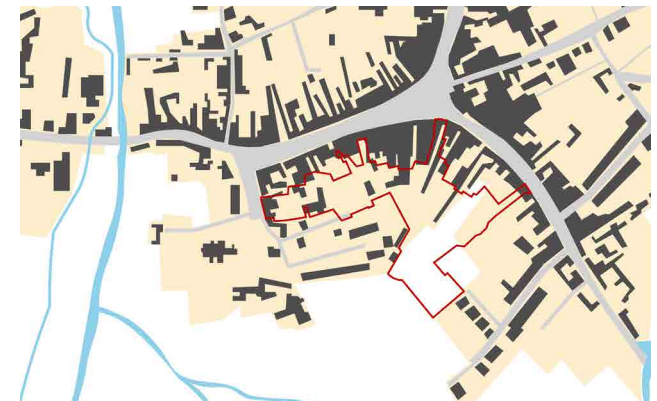
- Land south of the High Street site boundary
- Main road network
- Buildings
- Built up area
- Water bodies



**Figure 08:** Map showing Land South of the High Street and surrounding town centre context in 1887.



**Figure 09:** Map showing Land South of the High Street and surrounding town centre context in 1926.



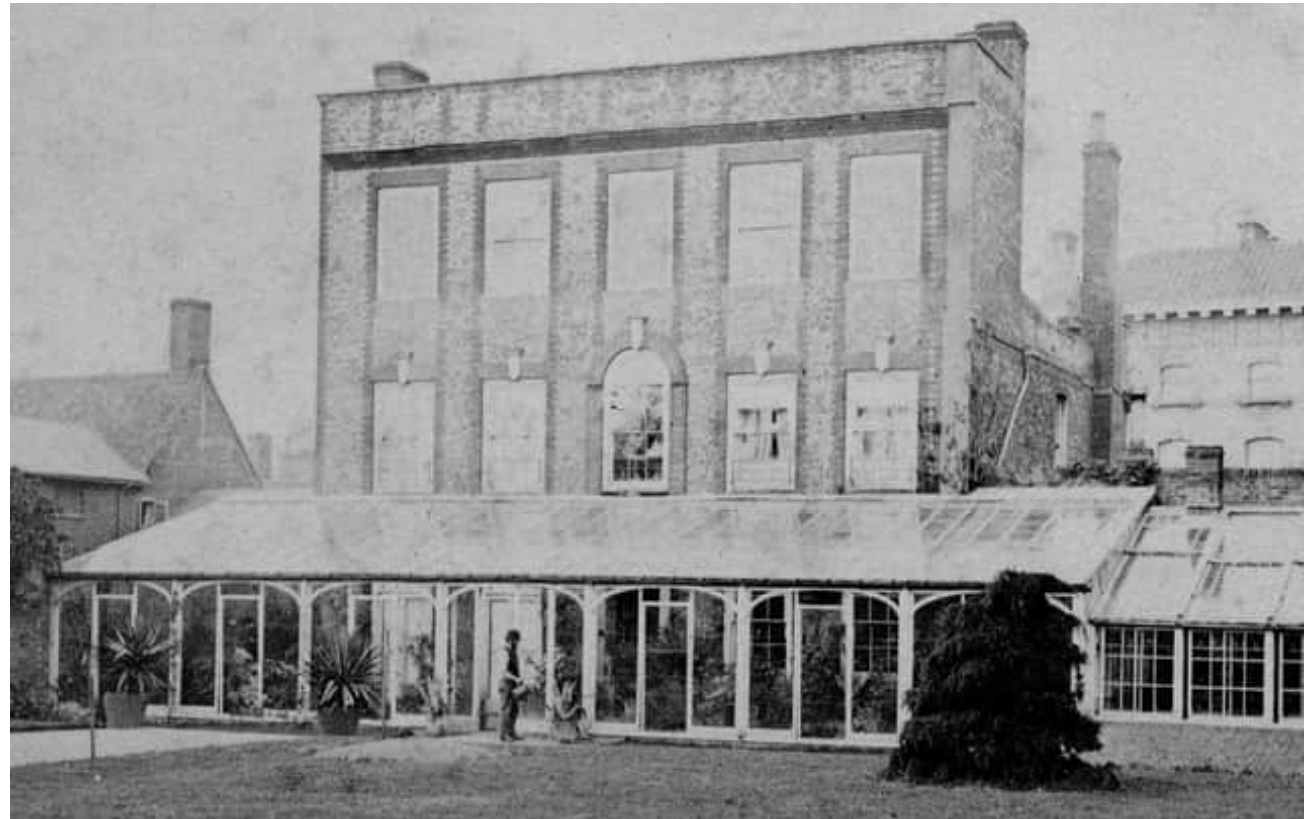
**Figure 10:** Map showing Land South of the High Street and surrounding town centre context in 1953.



## 4.2 Rothschild Estate Gardens

The Rothschild family built grand estates across Buckinghamshire, and their presence in the county endures to this day. In the 1880s, as the mansion at Waddesdon was being constructed, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild acquired Leighton House, located on the High Street of Leighton Buzzard. During his residence there, he entertained not only the aristocracy but also both British and foreign royalty.

The Rothschild Estate Gardens were situated in the Land South of High Street. Once part of the Rothschild family's expansive estate, the gardens remain a tangible link to the town's rich heritage and its connection to one of Britain's most influential families. The Rothschilds played a pivotal role in shaping the town's development, and their influence is still evident in many aspects of the local culture and architecture. Though presently overgrown and in a state of disrepair, the gardens continue to hold both historical



**Figure 11:** Leighton House taken from the rear in about 1890. (Source: <https://www.leightonbuzzardonline.co.uk/heritage-and-retro/heritage/heritage-arts-and-music-venue-being-devised-for-leighton-buzzard-town-centre-3213989>)

and ecological value, providing a unique opportunity to restore and preserve a piece of Leighton Buzzard's past for future generations.

The history of the Rothschild Estate Gardens is deeply intertwined with the legacy of the Rothschild family, who were major landowners and philanthropists. During the Victorian era, their presence in Leighton Buzzard brought prestige to the town, with the estate serving as both a private retreat and a symbol of their social standing. The gardens, once immaculately landscaped, were an integral part of the estate, contributing significantly to the aesthetic and cultural landscape of the town. Revitalising this green space not only honours this important historical legacy but also provides an opportunity to reconnect the community with its past while offering a much-needed green area for leisure, education, and cultural enrichment <sup>1</sup>.



**Figure 12:** The historic map showing Leighton House and Rothchild Estate Gardens, 1880  
(Source: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/229947789>)

1. <https://www.leightonbuzzardonline.co.uk/>

### 4.3 Land ownership

The site is under multiple landownerships. Central Bedfordshire owns the majority of land including Westlands Care Home and Day Centre. The backs of plots are owned by the private owners of the properties which front onto the High Street.

#### Key

- Land south of the High Street site boundary
- Main road network
- Buildings
- Central Bedfordshire Council owned land
- Privately owned land (multiple ownerships)
- Corporate owned land (fire station)



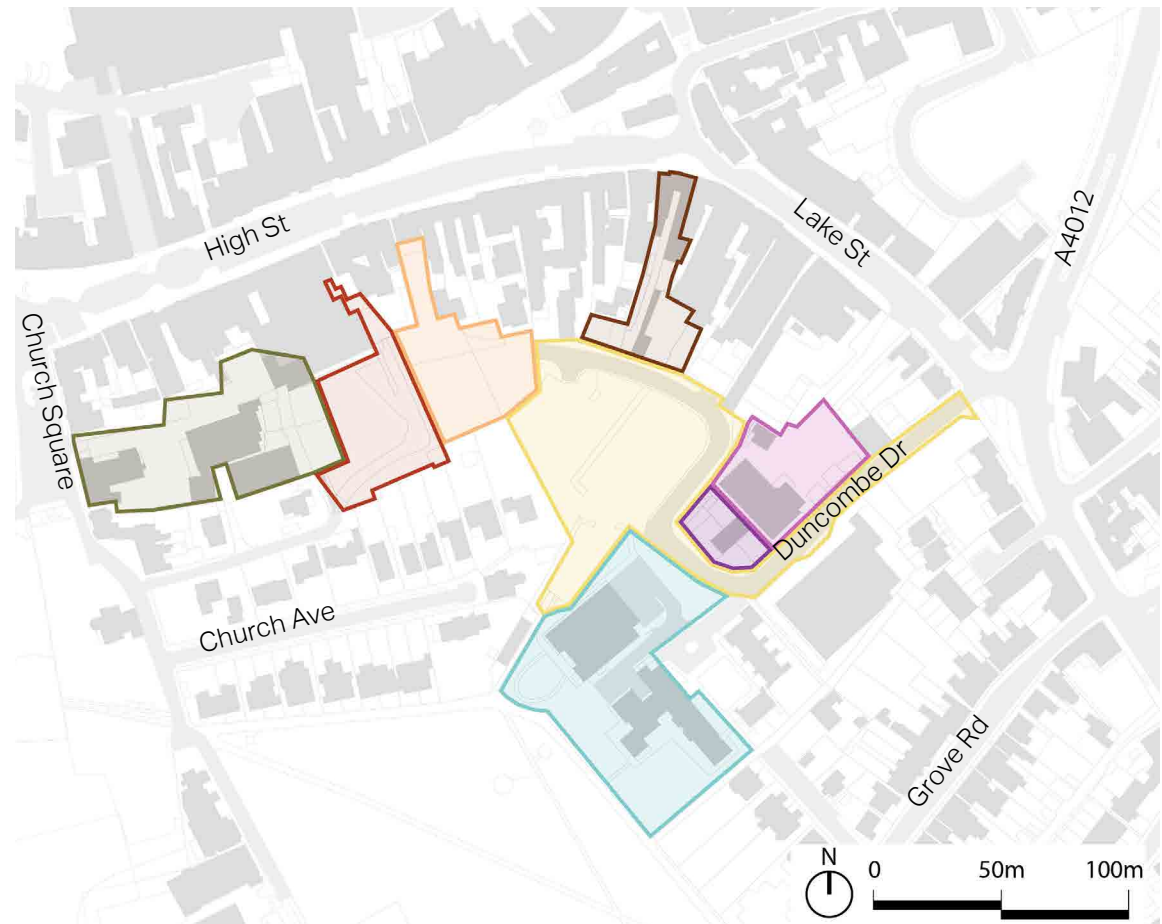
**Figure 13:** Map showing landownership



## 4.4 The potential sites for redevelopment

There are multiple areas which provide opportunities for redevelopment on the site. The map opposite shows all the current uses which make up the site. Potential sites for development include Duncombe Drive car park, Bell Alley, disused former cattle market, post office, disused sorting office and industrial buildings, disused land to the rear of the High Street, and Westlands Care home and Day Centre. Private residential and fire station areas are unlikely to be available for redevelopment.

- Area 1: Duncombe Drive car park
- Area 2: Westlands Care Home and Day Centre
- Area 3: Fire Station
- Area 4: Private residential
- Area 5: Bell Alley
- Area 6: Disused former Cattle Market
- Area 7: Disused land to the rear of the High Street
- Area 8: Post office, disused sorting office and industrial buildings



**Figure 14:** Map showing potential site for redevelopment

#### **Area 1: Duncombe Drive car park (0.71ha)**

The car park is accessed via Duncombe Drive which leads into the site from Lake Street to the east. The surface car park comprises circa 140 parking spaces. There is local desire to retain a similar number of spaces, but potential to move location of space within the site to free up land for redevelopment.

#### **Area 2: Westlands Care Home and Day Centre (0.62ha)**

There is a three storey care home (building in the south of the plot) and a single storey elderly persons day centre which also provides rehabilitation services for people recently discharged from hospital (building in the north of the plot). The care home and day centre are closing down and being replaced by a purpose built residential care home, Marigold House, located in a different area in Leighton Buzzard. There are both short and longer term opportunities for redevelopment. In the longer term it is likely the buildings will be replaced. In the shorter term there are opportunities for meanwhile use.

#### **Area 3: Fire station (0.17ha)**

Area accommodates Leighton Buzzard Fire Station and associated yard area, owned by the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service. Area is in use and this report assumes is unavailable for redevelopment.

#### **Area 4: Private residential (0.07ha)**

Two post-war semi detached private homes. Area is in use and unlikely to be available for redevelopment.

#### **Area 5: Bell Alley (0.16ha)**

This area comprises buildings fronting onto the High Street plus small shop units and other ad-hoc structures to the rear that front onto Bell Alley, a pedestrian-only alleyway. Bell Alley is a mix of ownerships. There is a Listed Building at the High Street end. Bell Alley itself does not offer much opportunity for infill development, given it is already quite built up to either side; however improvement of this area is viable through smaller interventions such as surface improvement, signage, waymarking, etc.

#### **Area 6: Disused former Cattle Market (0.23ha)**

This area comprises three derelict former industrial sheds and associated land which was formerly used as a Cattle Market. The site is currently disused and the northern part is in private ownership and the majority of southern part is owned by CBC. There is potential for redevelopment in this area (See Figure 13).

#### **Area 7: Disused land to the rear of the High Street (0.25ha)**

This area comprises a cleared previously developed site with areas of hard standing and vegetation which is currently disused. The site is understood to be in private ownership. There is potential for redevelopment in this area.

#### **Area 8: Post office, disused sorting office and industrial buildings (0.42ha)**

This area comprises the existing Post Office building and the land at the rear, which accommodates a disused sorting office and associated light industrial sheds. There is potential for redevelopment in this area.

## 4.5 Key issues, challenges and opportunities

Following the engagement results, workshop discussion and tour of the site with the Neighbourhood Plan steering group, as well as desktop research, a number of issues, challenges and opportunities for the Land South of the High Street have been identified as follows opposite and on the following pages.

### Issues:

- Lack of community and social infrastructure in the town centre;
- Underutilised brownfield sites that have not been redeveloped;
- Multiple landownership and threat of piecemeal development/ selling off pieces of land for housing without adequate facilities;
- Poor quality of public realm and pedestrian experience due to large areas of car parking and backs of properties with little natural surveillance over the land; and
- A housing dominated scheme would result in opportunities for other uses (cultural, community) being lost.
- Viability, including challenges funding any cultural and community facilities;
- Strong local desire to retain parking spaces; and
- A planning application has been submitted for the land located to the rear of 7-9 Church Square for a hotel (as detailed above). At the time of writing this application has not been granted. This report reflects the opportunity to instead allocate for uses more aligned with the vision of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan including cultural and community uses. Should planning permission be granted, the number of residential units proposed within this report will need to be adjusted accordingly, reflecting any reduction due to this development. This site will need to be considered within the options presented in Chapter 6.

### Challenges:

- How to reduce car reliance on this site;





**Figure 15:** Area of disused space with large hard standing space.



**Figure 16:** Cluttered space at the back of plots.



**Figure 17:** Large area of hard surface with little vegetation



**Figure 18:** Disused industrial shed.



**Figure 19:** Duncombe Drive car park which covers a large area of the site and is car dominated space.



### Opportunities:

- Alleyways offer existing pedestrian routes to the High Street - opportunity to improve pedestrian connectivity and the quality/pedestrian experience of existing routes (lighting schemes, use of paving, use of signage, use of active frontages);
- Opportunity for fine grain layout with narrow frontages continuing the pattern of the burgage plots;
- There is a strong artistic culture in the town and potential for a cultural quarter to allow this to further thrive;
- A restricted low-traffic service road through the site, which could facilitate the High Street becoming a pedestrianised area;
- Existing small green areas on the site and proximity to the recreation ground offer opportunities to improve the green network;
- Low-car development with car clubs, reflecting its excellent connections to reduce overall carbon footprint; and
- Potential for higher density development reducing pressure elsewhere in the town.



**Figure 20:** Creative space currently on site.



**Figure 22:** Alleyway from Lake Street into the site.



**Figure 23:** Pedestrian route from Duncombe Drive car park to Parsons Close recreation ground.



**Figure 21:** Alleyway from the High Street into the site.



**Figure 24:** Small green area with trees opposite the current day care centre.



Objectives and  
principles

05



# 5. Objectives and principles

## 5.1 Introducing the objectives

This chapter contains the objectives and principles for redevelopment in the Land South of the High Street. There are seven objectives which have been formed from the evidence base and analysis in the previous chapters. This includes the engagement results, workshop outcomes and analysis of the issues, challenges and opportunities relating to the site.

The objectives are based upon the five themes identified in Section 3.3 above.

The seven objectives and which themes they relate to are shown opposite - some of the objectives address multiple themes. Each objective is set out on the following pages.

**Objective 1:** Protect heritage and cherished appearance



Relates to Heritage and character theme

**Objective 2:** Use appropriate scale and density



Relates to Heritage and character theme

**Objective 3:** Improve walking and cycling connections to different parts of the town



Relates to movement and green themes

**Objective 4:** Improve the condition of the back of town centre plots



Relates to creative and green themes

**Objective 5:** Include a mix of activities



Relates to creative and community themes

**Objective 6:** Use attractive car parking arrangements



Relates to movement and green themes

**Objective 7:** Create good quality green spaces and connect with other green spaces in the town



Relates to community and green themes



## 5.2 Objective 1: Protect heritage and cherished appearance

The Land South of the High Street is located behind properties on the High Street, many of which are listed and parts of the site fall within the conservation area. This area forms part of historic core of the town and surrounding plots on the High Street, Lake Street and Church Square demonstrate the historic urban grain. To the west, there is the Grade I listed All Saints Church and churchyard. The Post Office building, though unlisted, is an important part of the area's character and sits within the west of the site.

Therefore, the Land South of the High Street impacts on the historic setting of the town. Any development on the site must consider potential impact on surrounding listed buildings and the overall setting of the conservation area.

The high number of listed buildings and conservation area in relation to the Land South of the High Street site is shown opposite. Particularly important listed buildings in close proximity to the site include:

- All Saints Church (Grade I listed);
- The Golden Bell Public House (Grade II listed);
- The Black Lion Inn Public House (Grade II listed);
- The Swan Hotel (Grade II listed); and
- The Market Tavern (Grade II listed).

It is not just the listed buildings and conservation area that are important - the whole town centre ensemble gives Leighton Buzzard a human scale quality that is cherished by residents. This is picked up in objective 2 below.

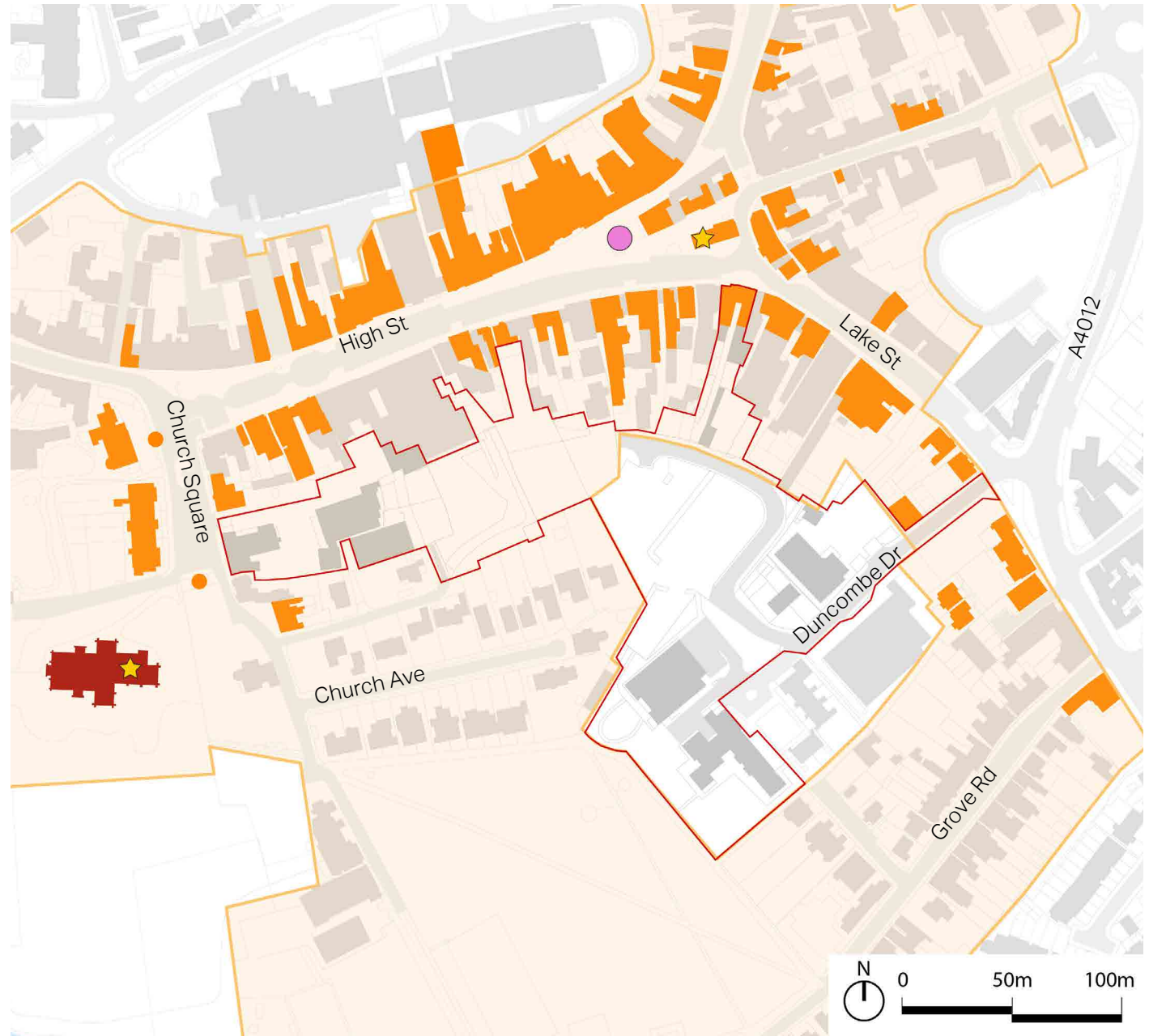


**Figure 25:** Grade I listed All Saints Church



**Figure 26:** Grade II listed The Golden Bell Public House

- Key
- Land south of the High Street site boundary
  - Main road network
  - Buildings
  - Conservation area
  - Grade I listed buildings
  - Grade II listed buildings
  - Scheduled monument
  - ★ Landmark building/ structure



**Figure 27:** Map showing the heritage features in and around the Land South of the High Street site.





### 5.3 Objective 2: Use appropriate scale and density

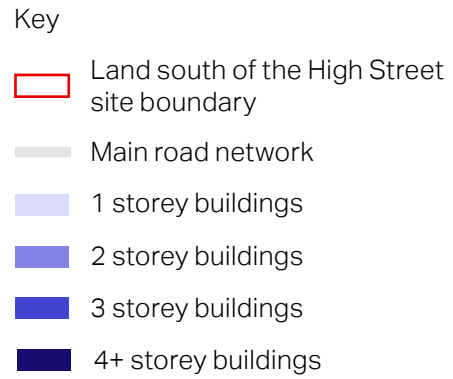
It is important to ensure any new development integrates into the existing scale and density levels to ensure the character of the town is maintained and the historical setting is not compromised.

Buildings which back onto the land vary in heights from one to three storeys. The historic urban grain of the High Street, Church Square and Lake Street produces a varied roofline, punctuated by chimneys.

The building heights and generally small scale of buildings also allows for views to landmarks such as the spire of All Saints Church.



**Figure 28:** Image showing the roofline as seen from the west area of the Land South of the High Street which includes one to three storey buildings and view of the spire of All Saints Church.



**Figure 29:** Map showing heights of buildings in and around the Land South of the High Street site.



## 5.4 Objective 3: Improve walking and cycling connections to surrounding parts of the town

Land south of the High Street is an important location within the town centre given that it is bounded by the High Street to the north, retail and culture uses along Lake Street to the east, residential properties and Parson's Close Recreation Ground to the south and the church, school to the west as well as onward connections to Bridge Street with further retail uses. In addition there are many existing alleyways from the High Street to the site. The space is therefore an important gateway for pedestrians and cyclists between different areas of the town centre.

To encourage walking and cycling and to help make it easier and more pleasant to navigate the town by foot or bike, the land south of the High Street site should incorporate objectives focused on pedestrian and cyclists. These include:

- Improve signage for existing routes - signage should be cohesive and form a network of routes. This could be through use of maps and fingerpost signs. The design of these should be considered to add to the character of Leighton Buzzard;
- Improve the alleyway conditions – these can feel unsafe for pedestrians where there are long strips of building backs, it is dark or surfaces are in poor condition;
- Link up routes - there are opportunities to create new routes by linking up existing alleyways and other informal paths;
- Provide improved cycle infrastructure - cycle storage should be incorporated into Land South to encourage bike use. Secure storage with onward walking connections to the High Street can encourage those who live further out from the town to cycle in and allow them to easily park their bike and walk to the High Street; and
- Use of shared spaces - high quality paving materials can be used to indicate a shared space.



Some precedents for how these solutions can be implemented are shown overleaf.

**Figure 30:** An alley from Lake Street to Duncombe Drive - an example of a pedestrian connection; however in need of improvements to improve the pedestrian experience and feeling of safety.



## Precedent images

### Shared surface



**Figure 31:** Shared surface with carriage and pavement on the same level. The shared surface can be used by all public realm users such as vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Trees can soften the area and improve the biodiversity, Walthamstow Village.



**Figure 32:** Example of high quality paving materials that give the impression of a shared space where vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists co-exist. (Source: Preston: <https://www.blogpreston.co.uk/2020/07/safety-action-plan-aims-to-bring-people-back-to-preston-city-centre/>).

### Cycle storage



**Figure 33:** Integrating cycle parking into streetscape, softened by vegetation.

### Wayfinding



**Figure 34:** A signage totem that offers information about different destinations in St Albans.



**Figure 35:** An example of signage in St. Albans showing the destination and the time.

### Alleyways



**Figure 36:** Well-integrated greenery in public realm.

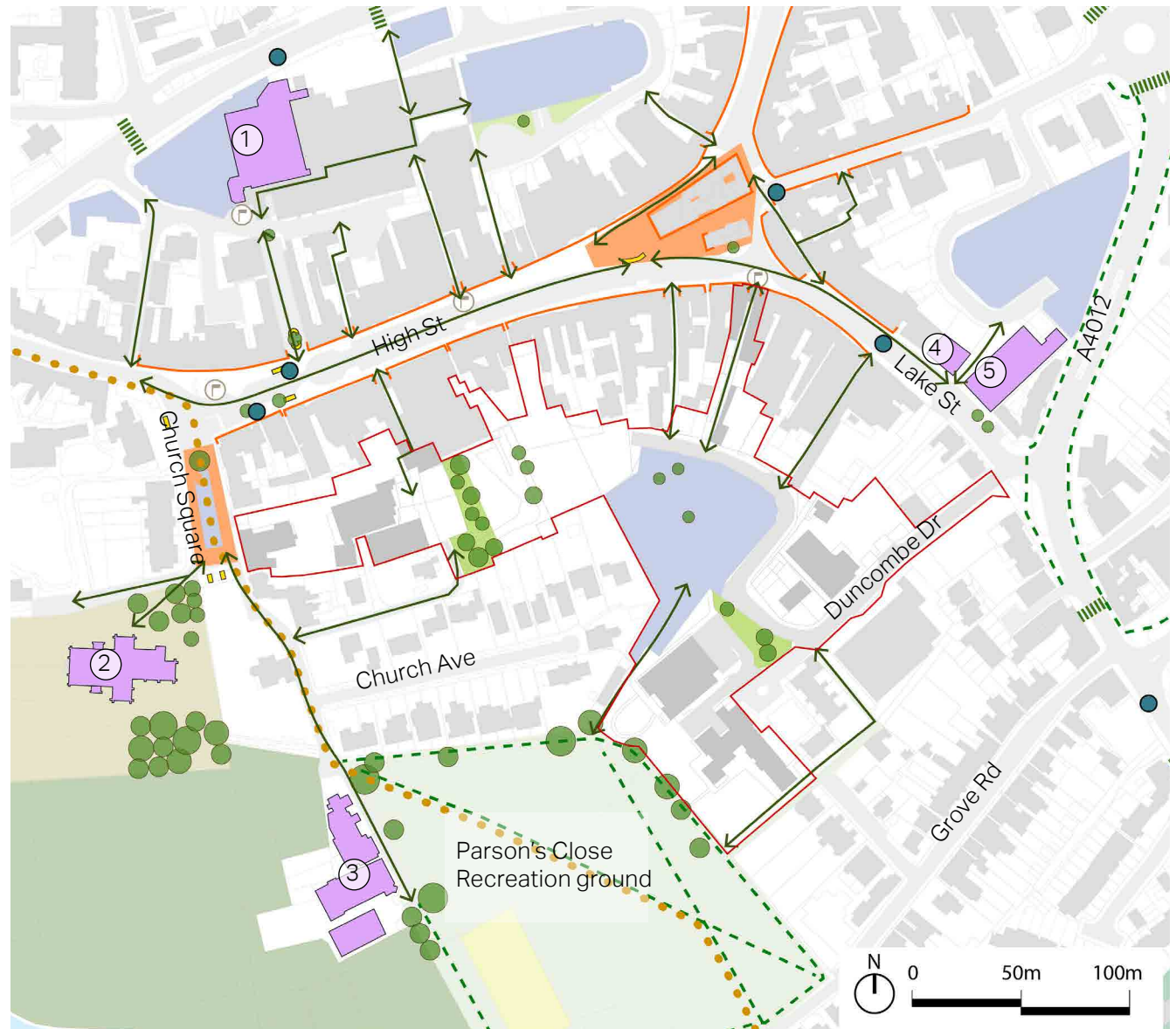


**Figure 37:** Decorative bricks along Grove Road in Leighton Buzzard which could be introduced to improve pedestrian surfaces, for example the alleyways.



# Key

- Land south of the High Street site boundary
- Main road network
- Buildings
- Destination buildings:
- ① Waitrose
- ② All Saints Church
- ③ Pulford School
- ④ Doctor's Surgery
- ⑤ Theatre and library
- Parking
- ↔ Pedestrian routes
- Public Rights of Way
- Cycle route
- ||||| Pedestrian crossing
- Bus stops
- Important retail frontage
- Existing street furniture
- Existing wayfinding
- Squares
- Green space:
- Trees
- Churchyard
- School field
- Recreation ground
- Children's play area
- Informal grass areas



**Figure 38:** Map showing existing walking and cycling connections to different parts of the town centre including green spaces and destinations such as the church, school and supermarket.



## 5.5 Objective 4: Improve the condition of the back of town centre plots

The northern and western edge of the site is bounded by the plots of buildings which front onto the High Street and Lake Street. Backs of buildings and plots form poor boundaries, due to lack of natural surveillance, lack of defined edges with hard surfaces. The spaces in these plots are used for market storage, but for the majority of the time are disused.

In addition there are areas within the Land South of High Street site of large hard surfaces which are disused. Improvements which could be made to these areas include:

- Create more defined boundaries through use of hedges, trees and planting. This helps to define the spaces and improve the streetscape;
- Introduce buildings or uses which provide natural surveillance over these areas of land;
- Where possible, reduce areas of hard surfacing with greenery or propose surface improvements;
- Improve the backs of buildings using green walls;
- Opportunity to use these areas to create an east-west service road along the backs of the plots, designed as a low-traffic route to minimise congestion and prevent rat-running, while still facilitating servicing and access. This road would also include restrictions for delivery vehicles, buses, taxis, and one-way only travel; and
- Introduce public art to revitalise these spaces.



**Figure 39:** Existing condition of the backs of plots on the site.

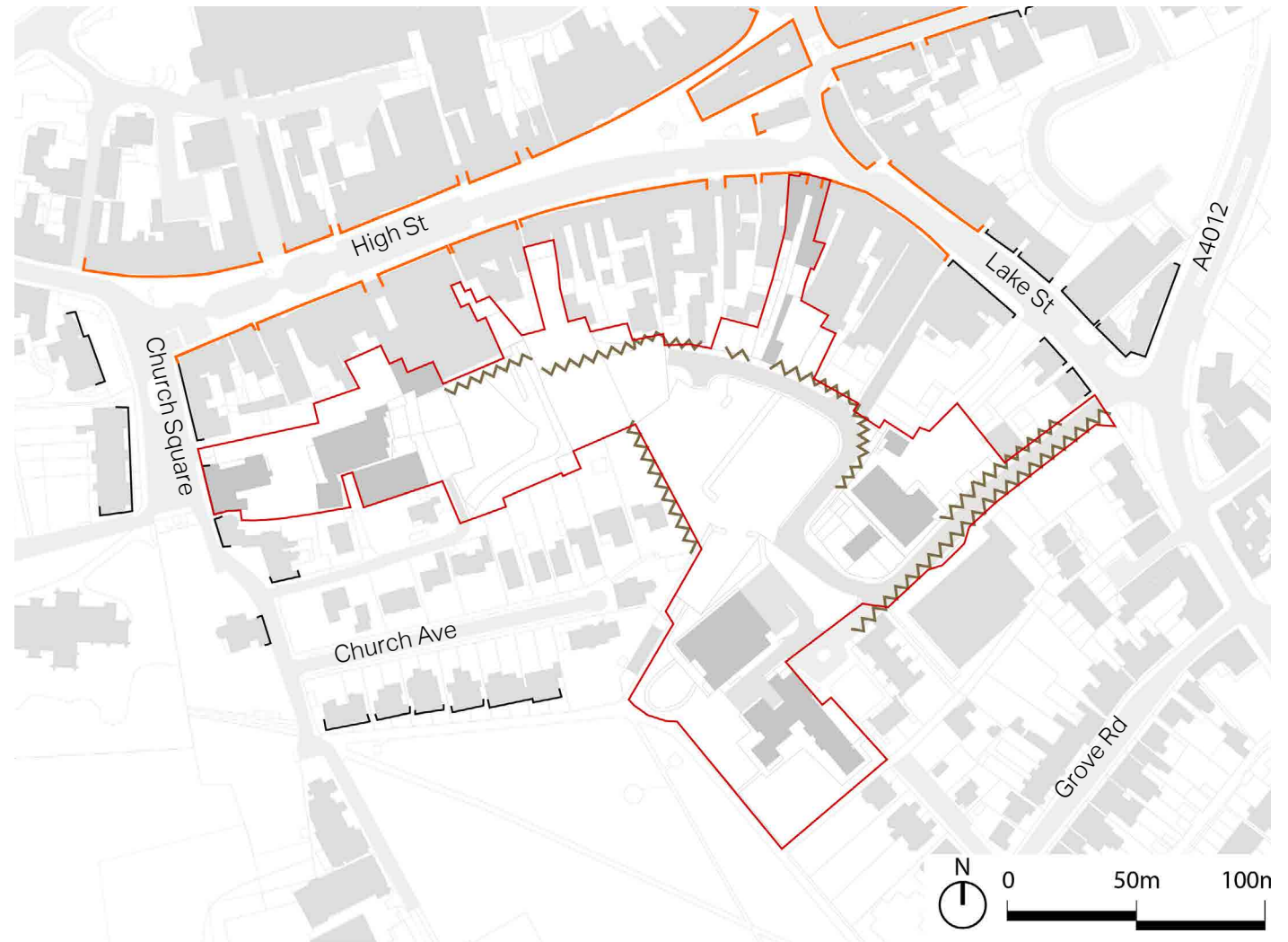


**Figure 40:** Existing condition of the backs of plots on the site.



**Key**

- Land south of the High Street site boundary
- Main road network
- Buildings
- Frontages
- Inactive frontages
- Important retail frontage



**Figure 41:** Map showing the frontages and inactive frontages of buildings and plots in and around the Land South of the High Street site.

## Precedent images

### Green wall



**Figure 42:** Green wall integral to the design of a new building, London



**Figure 43:** Green wall with integrated seating, London.

### Murals



**Figure 44:** Bright and welcoming public artwork, Portugal.



**Figure 46:** Vibrant community art activates closed shopfronts and reflects creative culture, Shrewsbury.

### Boundaries and public art



**Figure 45:** Simple seating incorporated into green boundary, London.



**Figure 47:** Public art installation (Dundee)





## 5.6 Objective 5: Include a mix of activities

Engagement revealed the support for increased community facilities, as well as the current lack of community spaces. There is an enthusiastic art and creative scene in Leighton Buzzard, which could be supported through development at Land South of High Street. To determine what uses are appropriate for the site, it is necessary to also consider the uses in the immediate vicinity. There is already much retail offering through the High Street and this is unlikely to be a successful use of the space. The lack of culture/ entertainment uses is evident on the map of existing uses.

To encourage footfall and also support a viable program, development should encourage a mix of activities. Furthermore, as a gateway site to the High Street, the land serves many purposes including car parking, and is bounded by different areas of the town.

### Precedent images



**Figure 48:** Performance events could take place in the flexible use space attracting a good number of people from all ages and offer entertainment. (Source: <https://www.connswatergreenway.co.uk/news/2016-09-05/love-victoria-park-a-great-day-out-for-all-the-family>)



**Figure 49:** An example of a community hub with a mix of complementary uses to maximise uses and activities. A library and gym in South Woodford. The income from the gym subsidise the library running costs (Source: <https://www.bing.com/images>)

**Figure 50:** Drawing classes could be organised by the library or the community in general to attract people from all ages and help them express themselves while being close to nature. (Source: <https://texashillcountry.com/texas-hill-country-extra-curricular-activities/>)



## Precedent images



**Figure 51:** Paley Park, New York



**Figure 52:** Pittsburgh Market Square: a public plaza filled with giant board games to bring opportunities to play



**Figure 53:** Arbory Bar in Melbourne: an inviting place for activities and socialising



**Figure 54:** Local artwork projects involving children from the community to foster a sense of ownership and local pride, London.

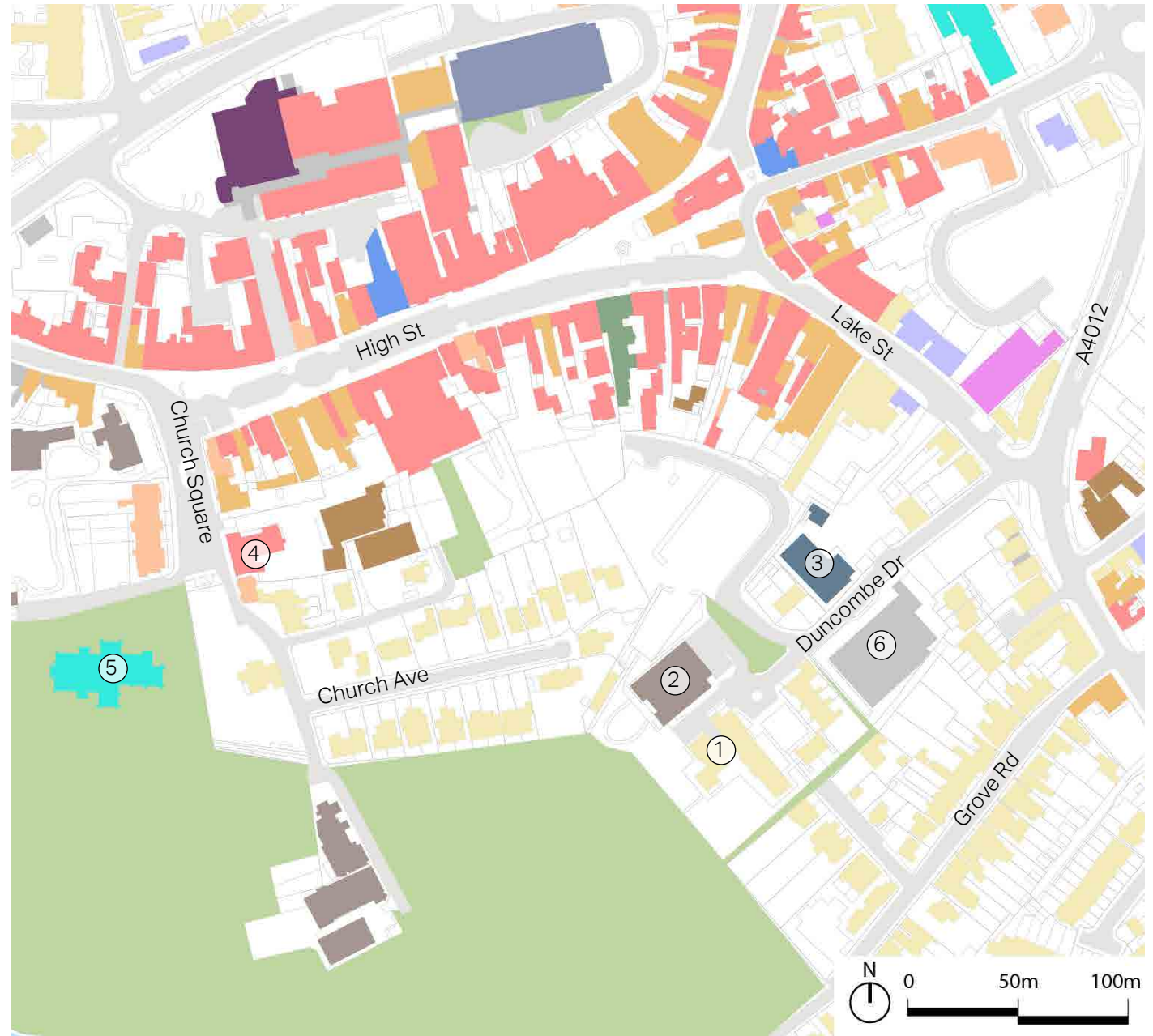


**Figure 55:** Incorporate locally distinctive design features and public art



## Key

- Land south of the High Street site boundary
- Main road network
- Retail
- Food and drink
- Residential
- Culture/ entertainment
- Bank
- Hotel
- Health
- Education
- Office
- Supermarket
- Industry/ employment
- Religious
- Police/ fire station
- Green space
- Multi-storey car park
- ① Care home
- ② Day centre
- ③ Fire station
- ④ Post office
- ⑤ All Saints Church
- ⑥ Telecom



**Figure 56:** Map showing the land uses in and around the Land South of the High Street site.



## 5.7 Objective 6: Use attractive car parking arrangements

A large area of the site is used for car parking. The car park is valued by local residents and well positioned for access to the High Street, so must be retained. However the large area of hard standing surface and dominance of cars does not create an attractive space or one which is pedestrian friendly.

Use of planting, integrated green spaces, street furniture and public art can improve the appearance of the car park and also help to align with the vision to build on the local creative scene.



**Figure 57:** Current car park on Duncombe Drive

### Precedent images

#### Use of trees and vegetation as screening



**Figure 58:** Precedent example of parking with a screened and attractive space (Paris, France).



**Figure 59:** Parking with permeable paving and tree planting (Calvados-Honfleur Business Park, France)





## 5.8 Objective 7: Create good quality green spaces and connect with other green spaces in the town

There are opportunities to improve the public realm in this area through promoting new green spaces, improving existing green spaces and linking to other green spaces. As a gateway between the recreation ground and the High Street the space also forms an important part of a green network and supports a greener High Street and town centre as a whole.

There are grass areas and unused green spaces in the Land south of the High Street. These could be improved and become valued spaces in the town centre through use of street furniture and landscaping. Low maintenance planting schemes such as wildflower areas help to increase biodiversity. Greener boundaries for backs of plots can be used to improve the appearance and better define private and public land.



**Figure 60:** Small green space near the day centre.

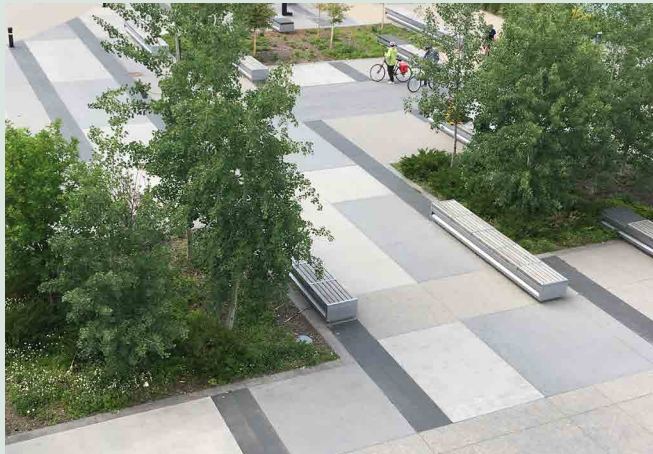


**Figure 61:** Disused space with unkept green area and trees.

## Precedent images



**Figure 62:** Planting encourages wildlife and seating encourages dwelling within public realm, Sheffield.



**Figure 64:** Contemporary, simple public realm with integrated planting.



**Figure 63:** Grey to green planting scheme in central Sheffield.  
Source: sheffield.net



**Figure 65:** Creative use of soft landscaping, Lima.



The background image shows a narrow alleyway between brick buildings. The building on the right has several windows with white vertical bars. A large green circle is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text 'The spatial framework' and the number '06'.

**The spatial framework**

**06**



## 6. The spatial framework

### 6.1 Spatial framework options

The seven objectives listed in Chapter 5 have informed the concept spatial framework and the spatial frameworks. The following page presents some principles derived from the main themes, objectives, and meetings with the Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Planning Group.

Two options are proposed for the site, as follows:

- Option One: Mixed-use residential-led development
- Option Two: Culture and community-led mixed-use

For each option, a series of proposed principles is followed by a concept plan, spatial framework, land use budget, and density study.

### 6.2 Option one: mixed-use residential led development

#### 6.2.1 Principles



#### *Protect Heritage and Cherished Appearance*

- Propose high-quality urban design that complements the surrounding town centre context and existing buildings, fostering a strong sense of identity and place.
- Propose the green space in the same location as the Rothschild Estate Gardens, honouring its heritage for both visitors and residents, while being overlooked by residential properties.
- Opportunity for a finer layout with narrow frontages, continuing the historic burgage plot pattern to the north of the site.



#### *Appropriate Scale and Efficient Use of Land*

- Restore or improve the empty retail spaces at the entrance of Bell Alley to make them more attractive and functional, potentially bringing in new businesses or uses.
- Develop a mix of uses on the site, ensuring a balance of residential areas, retail spaces (such as cafes and shops), and community areas (such as studios, live-work spaces) and health facilities.
- Propose residential development on underutilised sites such as the former Cattle Market, and some part of vegetation areas to improve the urban environment. Please note if the Hotel Application (CB/24/01869/FULL) granted the number of apartments will reduce.



### *Improve Walking and Cycling Connections*

- Enhance pedestrian and cycling routes through improved signage, lighting, wayfinding, and paving such as local star-shaped brick.
- Opening up pedestrian and cycling routes to increase permeability across the site, ensuring safety, visibility, and easy access to key destinations.



### *Deal with the 'Back Condition' of Town Centre Buildings*

- Introduce an east-west service road behind the burgage plots to support servicing of High Street properties and potentially reroute buses, enabling the pedestrianisation of High Street. This route, connecting the Post Office to Duncombe Drive and linking Market Square and Church Square, will offer spaces for people to linger. It will be a low-traffic, one-way route with restrictions for delivery vehicles, buses, and taxis, designed to minimise congestion and maintain pedestrian-friendly access

- Possibility to introduce green walls along the rear of High Street to soften the hardscaping and create a more attractive environment for residents.



### *Include a Mix of Activities*

- Provide spaces in front of the post office and mixed use area for seasonal events and community engagement activities (e.g., Christmas tree display, public celebrations at High Street and Bridge Street junction).
- Provide storage and parking for market traders, supporting local business.
- Provide an amenity space providing some opportunities for recreation uses and a children play area overlooked by proposed flats. Please see the landuse budget section.



### *Attractive Car Parking Arrangement*

- Propose a 'low-car' housing development enabled by access to local amenities, active travel provision and substantial car club provision.

- Proposing 120 parking spaces (replacing 140), including spaces for disabilities and electric vehicle charging, is justifiable based on the 2023 CBC survey showing the car park isn't at full capacity. Any shortfall could be addressed with alternative parking, such as the nearby library car park or a multi-storey car park suggested in the Town Centre Masterplan.
- Opportunities for visitor parking can be integrated.
- Improve the landscaping and surface quality of the Duncombe Drive car park to enhance its aesthetic and functionality.



### *Connect the Town Centre with the Recreation Ground and Greener High Street*

- Propose a green space along the route, with screening and pocket parks where possible.
- Encourage eco-friendly building designs, such as green roofs, solar panels, and climate change mitigation measures.
- Protect the tree to the northern part of Church Square which can act as prominent key node.

## 6.2.2 Concept plan

### Key

Land south of the High Street site boundary

#### Existing

Road network

Open space

↔ Pedestrian routes

★ Landmarks

#### Proposed

Retaining the uses

Low-car residential

Parking

Retail

Mixed use (resi- and community facilities)

↔ Service road

★ Landmarks



**Figure 66:** The concept plan for option 1



6.2.3 Spatial framework

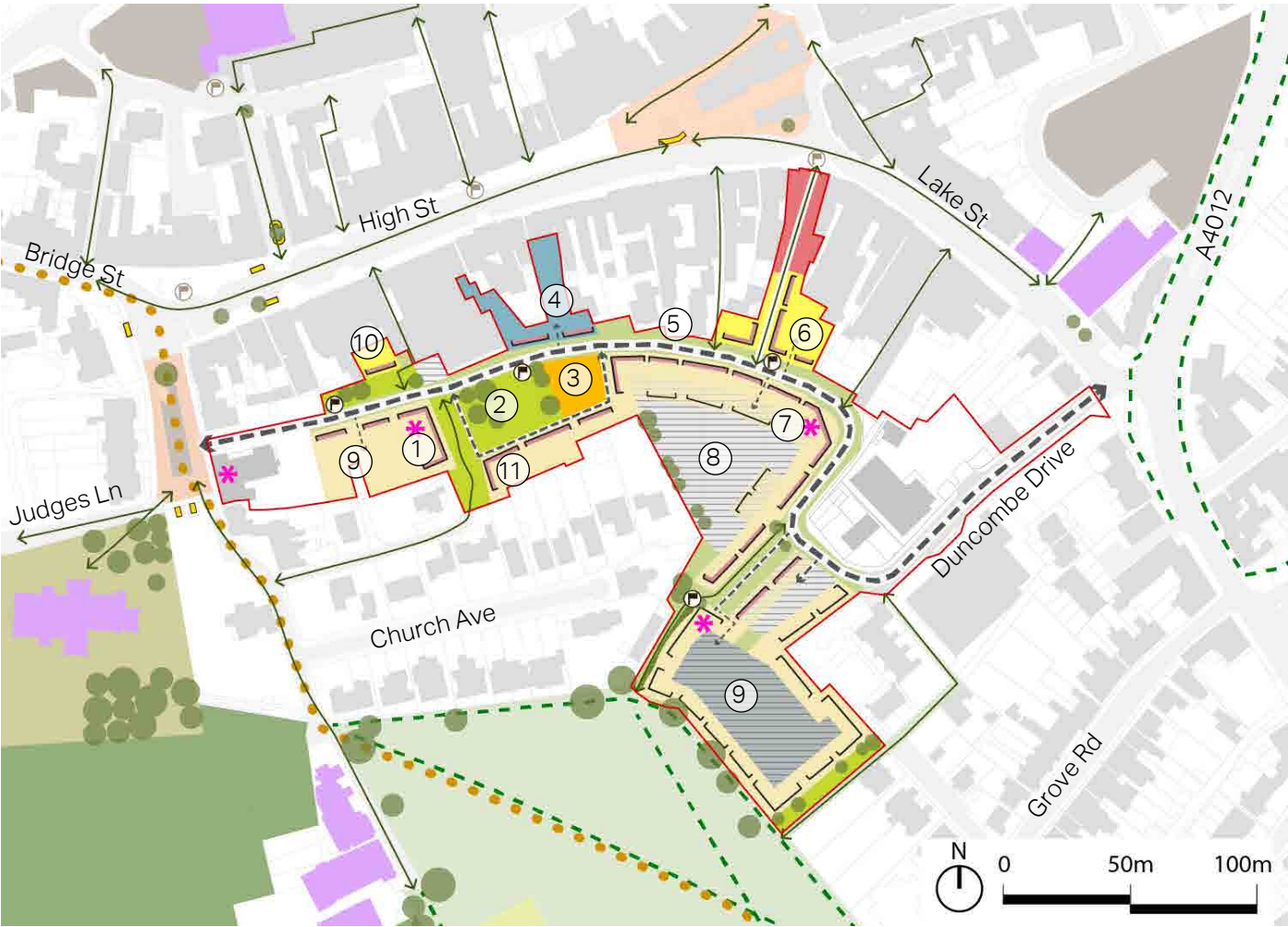
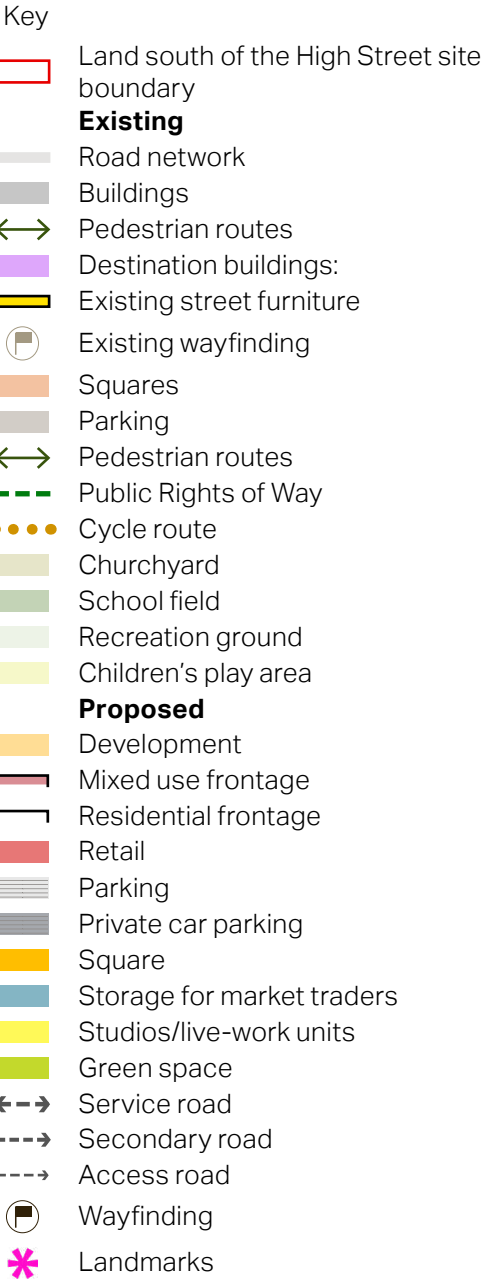


Figure 67: The spatial framework for option 1.

- ① Mixed-use residential - includes a mixture of retail, studio and residential uses with retail uses on the ground floor. Residential throughout can include sheltered accommodation.
- ② The proposed green space and play area, within the historic Rothschild Estate Gardens, complements the square to the right, creating space for spill-out and serving the local community. The landscaping includes wildflowers, native trees, and integrated seating, as shown in **Figure 71**, ensuring low-maintenance and climatic resilience while honouring the site's history.
- ③ Square and spill-out cafe space. This space is fronted onto by uses such as cafes, restaurants and coffee shops and has street furniture creating an outdoor space where people can meet and spend time. For example in **Figure 68**, **Figure 69** and **Figure 70**.
- ④ Storage and parking space for market traders who have stalls on the High Street markets.



**Figure 68:** A place to linger and connect, Bath.



**Figure 69:** Spill out uses activates the space and increases safety.



**Figure 70:** Public realm at Altringham Market (image: Sarah Thain).



**Figure 71:** Green space used for drawing classes- could be organised by the library or the community in general to attract people from all ages and help them express themselves while being close to nature. (Source: <https://texashillcountry.com/texas-hill-country-extra-curricular-activities/>).



- ⑤ Shared surface roads which serve pedestrians, cars and cyclists. Use of high quality surface materials and greenery which signal these roads as shared surfaces and encourage slow vehicle speeds. For example in **Figure 72** and **Figure 74**.
- ⑥ Studio spaces can be located here to provide surveillance over Bell Alley and cater to local artists. For example in **Figure 73**.
- ⑦ Landmark building to provide focal point for this corner position in the site and can be used as a wayfinding device.
- ⑧ Car parking provided on site with the 120 spaces and a share club car. Undercroft car parking is proposed underneath some sections of residential development to maximise parking spaces.
- ⑨ Residential parcel designed so that frontages overlook the pedestrian route and Parson's Close Recreation Ground to provide natural surveillance.
- ⑩ Live-work/studio units.
- ⑪ Health hub including GP and pharmacy services.



**Figure 72:** Shared spaces to minimise modal segregation (Slovenska Boulevard, Slovenia)



**Figure 73:** Vulcan works, Northampton - a converted Victorian warehouse which offers collaborative co working space, private offices and workshop spaces.



**Figure 74:** Pedestrian zones using materials within a de-cluttered environment



**Figure 75:** Car share club, Vauban



### 6.2.4 Land use budget

The site area is 2.65 and it includes the existing retail on Bell Alley, post office, fire station and existing private houses (accumulated area is 0.41ha).

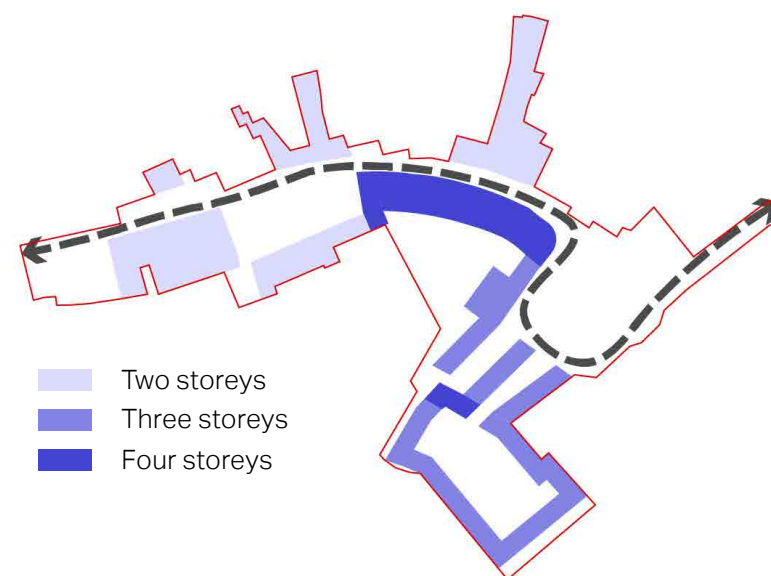
This option provides 151 flats over 1.72ha Gross floor area. The flats range between 1 and 2 bedrooms. The land use budget for Option 1 is as follows:

Land use	Footprint area	Gross floor area
Mixed use	0.52ha (All of this area included in residential)	0.52ha
Public prking	0.35ha (120 spaces)	0.35ha (120 spaces)
Private parking	0.18ha	0.18ha
Green space and other infrastructure	0.78ha	0.78ha
Residential	0.75ha (0.52ha included in mixed use)	1.71ha
Market storage	0.08ha	0.08ha
Studios	0.1ha	0.1ha
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.24ha</b>	<b>3.72ha</b>

### 6.2.5 Density study

Given the strategic location of the site, with its close proximity to the town centre, the proposal for a higher density is justified and can be provided whilst keeping building heights to a maximum of four storeys.

The proximity to the Town Centre supports the case for a higher density range, as developments in such locations can contribute to vibrant, sustainable, and walkable environments. As such, a density range of 70-80 dph would make efficient use of the land, enhance the viability of local shops and services, and foster community cohesion, aligning with the principles of the Local Plan and placemaking goals.



**Figure 76:** Proposed building heights associated with number of units for option 1.

## 6.3 Option two: Culture and community-led mixed use

### 6.3.1 Principles



#### *Protect Heritage and Cherished Appearance*

- Introduce high-quality urban design that blends seamlessly with the town centre's character and surrounding architecture, creating a distinct identity for the area.
- Propose the green space in the same location as the Rothschild Estate Gardens, preserving its heritage for both cultural uses and residents, with cultural units and residential properties overlooking the area.
- Potential for a compact layout with narrow facades, reflecting the burgage plot pattern to the north.



#### *Appropriate Scale and Efficient Use of Land*

- Create a diverse mix of community/cultural uses on the site, such as meeting rooms, creative industry, locally-rooted businesses, art gallery, and community facilities, health hub.
- Some residential area proposed in the centre of the site.
- Identify underused sites like the former Cattle Market for community/cultural development.



#### *Improve Walking and Cycling Connections*

- Improve pedestrian and cycle access by enhancing signage, lighting, paving (considering local materials like star-shaped brick), and clear wayfinding to encourage movement through the area.
- Increase pedestrian and cycling permeability across the site by opening new routes, ensuring safety and visibility, and making access to key destinations more intuitive.



#### *Deal with the 'Back Condition' of Town Centre Buildings*

- Propose an east-west service road behind the burgage plots to enable servicing of High Street properties and offer the possibility of rerouting buses, which would allow for the pedestrianisation of High Street. This route could be developed by creating a pathway from the Post Office, extending through to Duncombe Drive, and linking Market Square with Church Square, creating a more enjoyable space for visitors to move between these key areas. The road will be designed as a low-traffic route to minimise congestion and prevent rat-running, ensuring a more pedestrian-friendly environment while still providing essential access for servicing
- Consider the installation of green walls at the rear of High Street to soften the urban environment, improve the aesthetics of the area, and provide a more pleasant atmosphere for local residents.





### *Include a Mix of Activities*

- Develop a vibrant community/cultural quarter surrounding the existing post office, with adaptable spaces for a variety of events, community/cultural activities and creative uses. The post office can be used as meeting rooms or other community facilities which respect its historic context.
- Design spaces that can be used for seasonal and community-focused events (e.g., Christmas tree display, public gatherings at High Street and Bridge Street junction).
- Offer storage and parking facilities for market traders to support local businesses.



### *Attractive Car Parking Arrangement*

- Propose a 'low-car' housing development enabled by access to local amenities, active travel provision and substantial car club provision.
- Proposing 120 parking spaces (replacing 140), including spaces for disabilities and electric vehicle charging, is justifiable based on the 2023 CBC survey showing the car park isn't at full capacity. Any shortfall could be addressed with alternative parking, such as the nearby library car park or a multi-storey car park suggested in the Town Centre Masterplan.
- Enhance the relocated Duncombe Drive car park by improving its landscaping and surface quality, ensuring it aligns with the wider regeneration efforts.



### *Connect the Town Centre with the Recreation Ground and Greener High Street*

- Integrate more green spaces through the creation of pocket parks and green areas throughout the development.
- Foster sustainable development by encouraging eco-friendly building designs, including green roofs, and other climate resilience measures.
- Establish a focal point at the High Street and Bridge Street junction to create a key node that supports community events and seasonal displays.

6.3.2 Concept plan

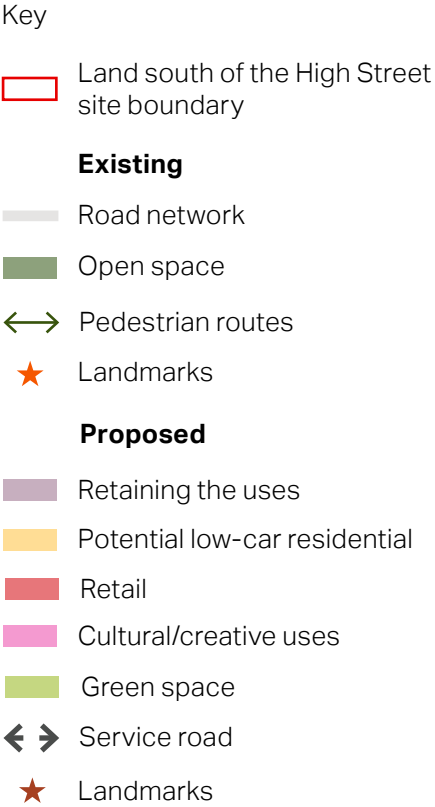


Figure 77: The concept plan for option 2



6.3.3 Spatial framework

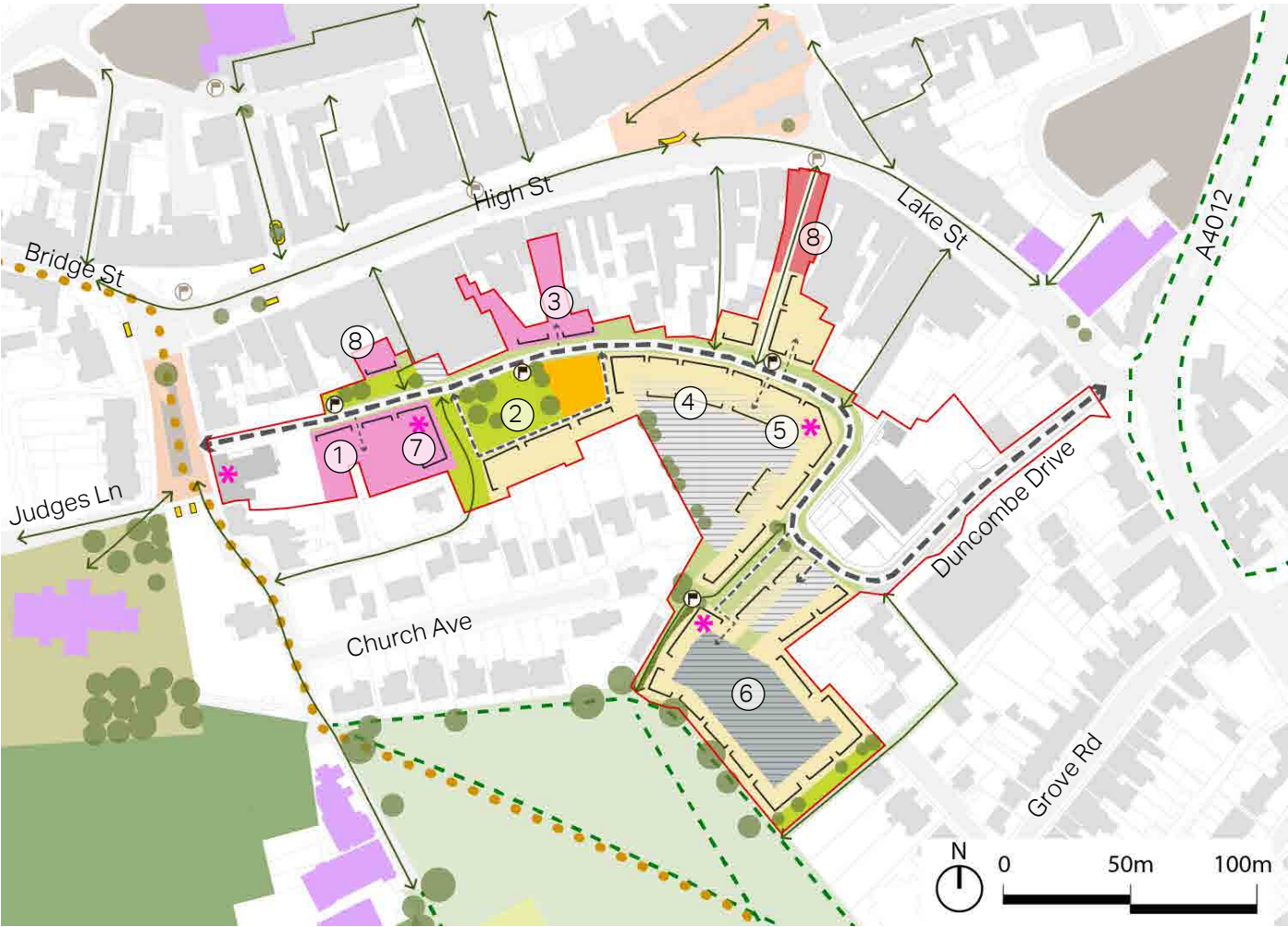


Figure 78: The spatial framework for option 2

- ① Community/cultural and creative uses such as a meeting room, and offices.
- ② The proposed green space and play area, set within the historic Rothschild Estate Gardens, complements the square and honours the site's heritage. The design features low-maintenance landscaping, native trees, and seating, ensuring climate resilience.
- ③ Space for market traders who have stalls on the High Street markets to store their stock.
- ④ Low-car residential development.
- ⑤ Land mark building at corner of site - height can be higher.
- ⑥ Car park provides 120 spaces and is relocated to the southern area of the site to allow for development at the heart of the site and make efficient use of the land. Green buffering and trees surround the car park to screen from adjoining residential plots and adjacent Parson's Close Recreation Ground.
- ⑦ Health hub including GP and pharmacy services.
- ⑧ Small and creative businesses



**Figure 79:** Co-location of facilities (Tibbys Triangle, Southwold)



**Figure 80:** Example of landscaping along a narrow walkway (Great Kneighton, Cambridge)



**Figure 81:** Active travel provision (Kings Cross, London)



**Figure 82:** Housing with variations of facing materials & soft landscaping (Great Kneighton, Cambridge)



### 6.3.4 Land use budget

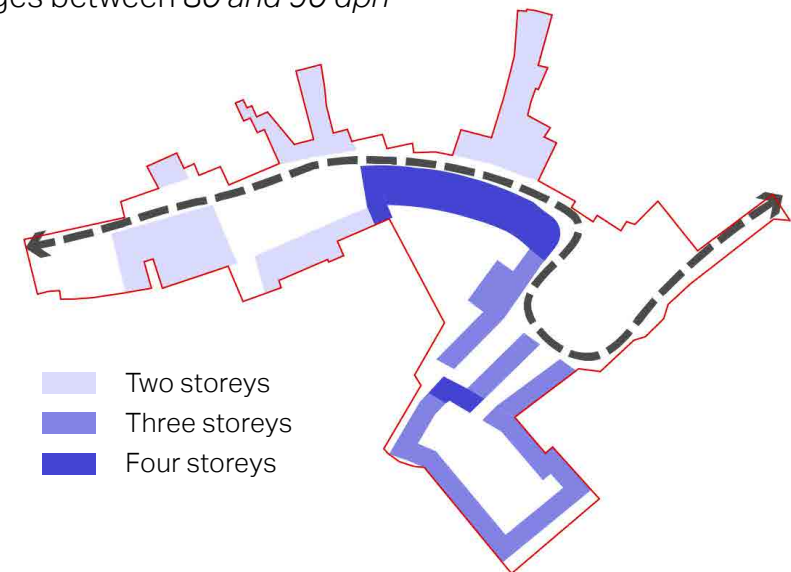
The site area is 2.65 hectares and it includes the existing retail on Bell Alley, post office, fire station, and existing private houses (the accumulated area is 0.41 ha).

In this option, residential Gross floor area is 2.12 ha, which provides 182 flats. The flats range between 1 and 2 bedrooms. The land use budget for Option 2 is as follows:

Land use	Footprint area	Gross floor area
Community/cultural use	0.25ha	0.5ha
Public parking	0.35ha (120 spaces)	0.35ha (120 spaces)
Private parking	0.18ha	0.18ha
Green space and other infrastructure	0.78ha	0.78ha
Residential	0.7ha (part of parking included under residential)	2.12ha
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.26ha</b>	<b>3.93ha</b>

### 6.3.5 Density study

This section remains the same as Section “6.2.5 Density study” but the proposed density for this area is higher compared to Option 1. This is due to the replacement of the mixed-use development with a residential area, which provides a denser developable area. Therefore, the gross density ranges between 80 and 90 dph



**Figure 83:** Proposed building heights associated with number of units for option 2.



**Next Steps**

**07**



## 7. Next Steps

Leighton Lincolde Land South of the High Street Spatial framework will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development. The table opposite identifies those groups who might use the spatial framework and how they would use it.

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 32) emphasises that a proportionate evidence base should inform plans. Based on a 'positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings' (see paragraph 15).

Policies should be 'underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals' (paragraph 32).

Actors	How they will use the spatial framework principles
<b>Applicants, developers, and landowners</b>	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
<b>Local Planning Authority</b>	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications.  The spatial framework should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
<b>Town Council</b>	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the objectives set out in the spatial framework are complied with.
<b>Community organisations</b>	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.

The objectives herein constitute place making principles and guidance to help interpret and apply the statutory policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is not an additional cost to development and good placemaking can result in uplifts in value.

Consequently, it is a key document to which developers, in particular, must make reference. They will be expected to demonstrate how they have responded to the provisions of the spatial framework and, in those instances where they deviate from the spatial framework, they will be required to demonstrate why the proposed changes represent an improved outcome in terms of the delivery of Leighton Lincolns Neighbourhood Plan objectives.



